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## THE FIRST HAWAIIAN SMALLPOX SCOURGE

The following account of the first  
visit of smallpox to Hawaii, in 1853, is  
taken from the Personal Reminiscences  
of Wm. Cooper Parke:

In the month of February, 1853, the  
ship Charles Mallory arrived off the port  
with a yellow flag flying from the fore-  
mast.

The pilot on going alongside found she  
had a case of smallpox on board.

The vessel was left outside the port,  
and the pilot returned to report the case  
to the Board of Health. He was ordered  
to anchor the vessel off Waikiki, where  
she then was, and the crew with the  
exception of the sick man were brought  
on shore, and quarantined in a house  
that stood near the former residence of  
Hon. G. W. Macfarlane, at Kapiolani  
Park.

Here the men were carefully watched  
and tended by Dr. Hoffman, lest the  
disease should spread. The sick man  
was brought to Honolulu, but there was  
no suitable place to put him.

Prince Lot Kamehameha then offered  
the use of a house to the Board of  
Health, which they gladly accepted. This  
house was a large one, made of glass,  
in the vicinity of the present Quarantine  
Station. The house stood on an island,  
and at high tide was surrounded by wa-  
ter, so that it served the purpose very  
well.

After taking the patient to the place,  
and supplying him with what was neces-  
sary, no one could be found who was  
willing to go over and nurse him.

For the first five days he was alone the  
greater part of the time.

One of the members of the Board went  
over every morning and prepared the  
man's food for the day, until he was  
able to care for himself.

After the vessel had been quarantined  
for twenty-one days and thoroughly fu-  
gimaged, she came into port. All the  
bedding in the fore-cabin as well as the  
men's clothing was burned to prevent  
any further trouble.

After loading with oil the vessel stop-  
ped at the Station to take on board the  
man, who had recovered, and been pro-  
vided with a new outfit. After the man  
left the island the house with all its con-  
tents was destroyed by fire to prevent  
any spread of the disease.

As this was the first time such an event  
had occurred, the Government had no  
fund from which to defray the expenses  
of this quarantine, which amounted to  
fifteen hundred dollars. I therefore was  
obliged to pay it myself.

When the Legislature met in the fol-  
lowing year a resolution was passed to  
refund to me this sum, which read as  
follows:

Joint Resolution for the Relief of W. C.  
Parke.—Approved May 25, 1853.

Whereas, in enforcing the quarantine  
of the ship Charles Mallory and her pas-  
sengers, in accordance with the instruc-  
tion of His Majesty's Privy Council, Mr.  
W. C. Parke, the Marshal of the King-  
dom, has incurred the heavy expense to  
meet which no appropriation has been  
made;

Therefore, be it enacted by the King,  
the Nobles and the Representatives of  
the Hawaiian Islands in Legislative  
Council assembled:

That the Minister of Finance be, and  
he is hereby, empowered and instructed  
to pay out of any moneys that may be  
in the Treasury, to the order of W. C.  
Parke, the sum of one thousand five  
hundred (1,500) dollars.

The following is the list of passengers  
by the ship Charles Mallory: Captain G.  
T. Lawton, Captain F. A. Newell, Mr.  
F. L. Hanks, Mr. P. Emmett, Mr. E.  
P. Hutchins, Mr. H. McDonald, Mr. J.  
Pawtusk.

### THE SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC OF 1853.

As no new cases of smallpox appeared  
for two or three months after the de-  
parture of the Charles Mallory, the au-  
thorities felt that they had nothing more  
to fear in that line; but the one case  
from that vessel was nothing compared  
to what followed. On the 13th of May,  
a man called at my office and reported  
that two native women living on Mauna-  
kea street were ill, and he feared that  
the trouble was smallpox. On going to  
the place the report was found to be  
true, and a guard was placed around the  
house, with strict orders to allow no one  
to leave or enter it. The Legislature was  
then in session, and on the 15th passed  
an Act authorizing the King, Kameha-  
meha III., to appoint three commis-  
sioners of public health; and on the same  
day His Majesty nominated Mr. G. P.  
Judd, Dr. T. C. B. Rooke and myself.

The first section of the Act referred to  
reads as follows:

"That there shall be appointed by the  
King, with the assent of the Privy Coun-  
cil, a commission consisting of three per-  
sons, who shall act without pecuniary re-  
ward, upon whom shall devolve all the  
powers and duties intended and expressed  
in the Act of the 8th of May, 1851, en-  
titled a law establishing a Board of  
Health, with power to extend the same  
to all parts of this Kingdom, in person,  
or through their agents; and who are  
hereby authorized and empowered to pro-  
vide for all persons sick with the small-  
pox suitable medical attendance, food,  
lodging and clothes, at the expense of  
the Hawaiian Government, and to make  
and publish such regulations for the  
public health as they may think wise  
and expedient, and enforce them by  
fines or otherwise through the courts."

The Commissioners met at once and  
organized, Dr. Rooke being chairman,  
and J. Hardy, secretary. As there was  
no suitable place in which to take care  
of the patients, we selected a building  
on Queen street, which belonged to the  
Government, and had it fitted up for a  
hospital. When the two women were to  
be moved to the hospital, no one could  
be obtained to pick them up and carry  
the case; so we had to do it, and  
drive the wagon as well. The day  
after the removal of the two women, an  
examination was made of the infected  
district, and some two or more cases  
were found, which were removed to the  
hospital.

We took the utmost precautionary  
measures to prevent the spreading of the  
disease; notices were issued and widely  
circulated. The Minister of Public In-  
struction was authorized to take every  
necessary step for a general vaccination,  
and measures were taken to prevent the  
extension of the disease to the other Is-  
lands by coasting and other vessels. Sub-  
commissioners and agents were appointed  
throughout every district of the Islands  
with full instructions from us; and di-  
rections were issued to all pilots and  
boarding officers, so that should the dis-  
ease break out in any place means might  
be taken to meet it in every direction.

The following named gentlemen were ap-  
pointed by us to act as our agents on  
the other Islands: For the Island of  
Kauai, James F. B. Marshall, E. P.  
Bond and J. W. Smith, M.D.; for the  
Island of Maui, P. H. Treadway, J. R.  
Dow, M.D., and D. Baldwin, M.D.; for  
the Districts of Hilo and Puna, Hawaii,  
Benjamin Pittman, J. H. Coney and C.  
H. Wetmore, M.D.; for Kona, Rev. P.  
Kinney; for North and South Kona, P.  
Cummins, J. Fuller and J. D. Paris;  
for Waimea and Kawaihae, Dr. Nicholl,  
Humphries and Macey.

Up to May 20, no new cases were re-  
ported; but by the 31st of the following  
month all the reported cases were traced  
to the locality where the disease first  
appeared, and it was feared that it  
was widely disseminated. The worst  
fears were soon realized, for in a week  
cases were reported in every quarter of  
Honolulu, Manoa, Paio, Lela, Nuu-  
anu, Kaliua, Kalia and Ewa. The dis-  
ease spread like wildfire, and the natives  
were panic-stricken. There had been but  
little general vaccination among the na-  
tives, so the disease had a clear field,  
and as they were ignorant of the malady,  
and did not know how to take care of  
themselves, they died like sheep. By the  
24th of June the cases numbered 412,  
and throughout July and August the dis-  
ease raged with terrible violence over  
the entire Island. The whole medical  
staff of Honolulu came forward at the  
first, and offered their aid and services  
gratuitously to the Commission, which  
were gratefully accepted. It was a very  
serious thing to do, as it meant hard  
work night and day, with personal risk  
and no pay.

By the middle of July the question  
arose as to the burying of the dead. No  
one, not even those who had recovered  
from the disease, or who had not taken  
it, would assist in such work. There-  
fore the Commission was obliged to call  
on all able-bodied men who had recov-  
ered to help the police in that work;  
and in case of refusal they were fined or  
imprisoned. It was a harsh measure, but  
a necessary one for the public good, as  
the Honolulu police were most laborious-  
ly employed night and day in attending  
the sick and burying the dead in the  
town, and could not be sent two or three  
miles away to perform that duty. At  
this time there were in the fort six men  
who had been engaged in the riot of the  
previous year and who had had the  
smallpox. The King authorized me to  
offer them their freedom if they would  
consent to bring the sick to the hospi-  
tals, and help bury the dead. They  
agreed to this offer, and no light task  
did they find it; as forty or fifty was the  
usual number buried daily, and some-  
times more, the men were often kept  
working until midnight, after having  
been at work all day long. At the end  
of July, forty houses were put up at  
Waikiki and thirty on the Ewa side of  
Honolulu, as hospitals.

Pages could be filled describing the  
heroic work done by volunteers in nurs-  
ing the sick; and there are some here  
today who could tell of heart-rending  
scenes. Families were broken up; par-  
ents deserted their children; the husband  
would leave the rest of the family in a  
dying condition. It was not uncommon  
to find an entire family sick at the  
same time, or to enter a house only to  
find dead bodies. The disease appeared  
in the most remote places, and numbers  
seemed to take it from mere grief; it  
was a time that tried men's souls.

After August the disease began to  
abate, and by the end of the year it had  
almost disappeared. Thanks to the quar-  
antine enforced, there were not many  
cases on the other Islands, so that those  
living there knew comparatively little  
of the dreadful times on Oahu.

During the prevalence of the disease,  
a number of meetings were held by the  
residents, and considerable excitement  
was caused by some persons who made  
a political affair of it, charging Dr. Judd  
and Mr. Armstrong as the persons who  
were responsible for the introduction of  
the disease. A more wilful accusation  
could not be imagined; but certain ones  
who had ill-feelings against the former  
carried the matter so far that he was  
removed from office. Naturally this caused  
a good deal of feeling, which was un-  
fortunate, as the whole community were  
doing their best to stop the disease, so  
as to be entirely free of it when the  
whaling fleet came in the fall; and every  
means were taken to purify the town.  
The disease had been mostly concentra-  
ted around Maunakea street, and as it  
was impossible to purify many of the  
grass houses, in the latter part of Au-  
gust fourteen of them were burned down,  
the Fire Department having been pre-  
viously called out to prevent the spread  
of the flames.

As the epidemic began to subside an  
investigation was made as to its origin.  
Many attributed it to the case from the  
Charles Mallory, but it could not have  
come from that one case, as some  
months had passed since that vessel had  
left before it made its second appear-  
ance. The nearest the Commission got  
to the truth was that a captain of a  
merchant ship, numbered two, had given  
the disease to the two women to wash.  
In a conversation with one of the  
Commissioners, he said that only a  
week before leaving that city the occu-  
pant of the room next to his had died  
of the smallpox. The partitions between  
the rooms were made of brown cotton  
cloth, and his (the captain's) clothing  
hung against this partition of cloth; and  
on his arrival here he had given this  
clothing to the two women to wash. A  
story was circulated that the disease  
came from a lot of old clothing that had  
been brought here and sold, some months  
prior to the first case; but there was no  
foundation to it.

I have already alluded to the meas-  
ures taken to purify the town before  
the arrival of the whaling fleet. The fleet  
at this time numbered two or three  
thousand men, and as the Commission  
had reason to think that the greater  
part of them had never been vaccinated,  
and as the ships were shortly expected  
from the Arctic, it was decided, on their  
arrival, to keep all the crews on board  
until they were vaccinated. This deci-  
sion was laid before Hon. Elisha H. Al-  
len, then the United States Consul, and  
he was asked to call at the meeting of the  
other Consuls to consider it. This was  
done, and all of them agreed that it was  
a wise measure, and further, that they  
would assist the Commission in carrying  
it out. Shortly after this meeting, Mr.  
Allen resigned his office, and was suc-  
ceeded by Mr. B. F. Angel, who, in com-  
pany with the other Consuls, issued the  
following circular, which was sent to  
the vessels on their arrival in port:

United States Consulate,  
Honolulu, Sept. 21, 1853.

Sir: The undersigned, American Con-  
sul at this port, with the concurrence of  
the Commissioners of Health, would re-  
spectfully urge upon the masters of  
American vessels coming into the harbor  
of Honolulu the strict observance of the  
following regulations:

1. On the arrival of your ship, you are  
requested to have such of your crew as  
have not had the smallpox or varioloid,  
vaccinated for kinexop.

2. You are requested to retain on-board  
your vessel, for the period of eight days,  
all men not protected by vaccination.

At your request, any regular physician  
you may name will visit your vessel, and  
vaccinate such of your crew as may be  
necessary, at the rate of half a dollar  
for each person, where the number  
amounts to ten. After the fifth day the  
same physician will again visit your  
ship, and re-vaccinate those whose pus-  
tules have not begun to form. After the  
eighth day, or when the physician shall  
pronounce them protected from conta-  
gion, your men may safely come on  
shore; and it is believed that an observ-

ance of these regulations will entirely  
protect your crew from the smallpox. I  
am happy to be able to inform you that  
there is little of the disease remaining in  
Honolulu, and no case among the white  
population. No case exists among the  
shipping. The disease has thus far been  
almost exclusively confined to the na-  
tives, and efficient measures have recent-  
ly been adopted to prevent its further  
ravages. I am permitted to name and  
recommend the following physicians,  
either of whom will visit your vessel, if  
you desire it, upon the terms indicated:  
Drs. Hardy, Newcomb, Ford, Lathrop,  
Hoffman, Hillebrand, Smyth and Schell.

With much respect, I have the honor  
to be, etc., B. F. ANGEL,  
United States Consul.

It was a harsh rule to make, but it  
was the only thing to do to prevent a  
second epidemic, as it was ascertained  
that not one-half of the crews had ever  
been vaccinated. Only one man in all  
the fleet had the disease, and he recov-  
ered. During the epidemic but one fore-  
igner died; he was the man who had  
charge of the large hospital on Queen  
street. He had had smallpox before, and  
at the outbreak of the epidemic volun-  
teered his services, and did a noble  
work; he nevertheless took the disease,  
and his was one of the worst cases I  
have ever seen. I am sorry I cannot re-  
call his name. Some fifty-odd of the na-  
tive constables died of the disease in the  
discharge of their duties as officers. I  
regret that the record book of the Com-  
missioners cannot be found. It, with all  
the reports and documents, was delivered  
to the New Board of Health, and I have  
not been able to find it; so I cannot give  
the number of cases and deaths from that  
source. However, I will give the  
numbers as accurately as possible. The  
following estimate is that of the Com-  
missioners of Public Health in the "Poly-  
nesian" of January 27, 1854: Number of  
cases, 6,405; number of deaths, 2,485—a  
death rate of almost 39 per cent.

The expenses of the Health Commis-  
sioners, which amounted to \$20,115.84,  
were provided for by the Legislature,  
April 28, 1854, in the form of a bill (in-  
troduced by Mr. Marsh) for the relief of  
the King and Privy Council; and the  
rules being suspended, it was read a  
second and third time, and passed. Prior  
to the passing of this bill, Dr. Lathrop  
sent in a claim for \$2,500 for attendance  
on sick natives during the epidemic. The  
Legislature sent a circular letter to all  
the physicians in Honolulu, assuring what  
their claims were. All disavowed any  
claim, with the exceptions of Dr. La-  
throp for \$2,500, Dr. Newcomb for \$2,800,  
and Dr. Hillebrand for \$2,500; these were  
referred to the Committee on Claims,  
who reported, May 16, that the petition  
of Dr. Lathrop had no legal claim—the  
Health Commissioners having promised  
no remuneration, their powers not au-  
thorizing them to do so. Mr. Harris  
read a minority report, recommending  
the payment of \$524. Both reports were  
referred to a committee of the whole,  
which, on July 19, unanimously passed  
the following preamble and resolution:

"Whereas, during the prevalence of the  
late epidemic, the Royal Health Commis-  
sioners, with their deputies, the medical  
practitioners throughout the Islands, and  
very many others, both foreigner and  
native, most generously contributed their  
services gratuitously in affording assis-  
tance to the sick and suffering poor; and  
whereas the value of their services can-  
not be estimated in money, and it being  
moreover out of our power to recom-  
pense them; therefore it is

"Resolved, That this House do, in be-  
half of the people whom we represent,  
render our most sincere thanks to all  
who in that time of calamity rendered  
such gratuitous and invaluable aid in  
alleviating the distress of the suffering,  
sick and dying people of these Islands."

HEALTH COMMISSIONERS.

May I Please Your Majesty: At the  
time of Your Majesty's first confiding  
to us the responsible duties attaching to  
our Board, we attempted to prevent the  
spread of the smallpox by vaccination,  
isolation and appointment of sub-com-  
missioners on the other Islands with  
power equal to our own. Finding that  
the disease had already been too much  
spread on Oahu to allow of the preven-  
tion of its general dissemination on that  
Island, it became our great object to  
hinder its extension to the other Islands.  
In this attempt we have received the  
most efficient support from the several  
sub-commissioners, whose local knowl-  
edge enabled them to make regulations  
adapted to the peculiarities of their var-  
ious fields of labor, and to which regu-  
lations we have given our strongest sup-  
port. On Oahu where the disease raged  
in its virulence, hospitals were erected  
and furnished with everything necessary  
for the reception of all the sick who  
could be induced to enter them. Medi-  
cines have been supplied to all who  
needed them. Every medical man or other  
intelligent person willing to assist the  
sick, either volunteered or was engaged  
for pay. Whenever nurses could be pro-  
cured, they were employed, and a band  
of prisoners was devoted to the revol-  
ving office of burying the dead.

The patient exertions of these latter  
assistants render them, in our humble  
opinion, highly deserving of Your Maj-  
esty's merciful consideration. As the  
sick have been strictly prohibited, of  
course, from going into the kalo patches  
for food, we have been obliged to sup-  
ply provisions generally in such form as  
tea, sugar, rice, arrow root, etc. The  
distribution of these articles has given  
rise to some abuse, but has been a mat-  
ter of necessity on our part. One great  
item of expense has been the reimburse-  
ment of those whose infected houses we  
were obliged to destroy, and there will  
be still heavier calls upon the funds in  
our hands on the same ground. In order  
to purify the town in view of the ap-  
proaching season of the whaling fleet's  
arrival, 200 which so much of the prosper-  
ity of the Islands generally depends, a  
considerable sum of money will have to  
be outlaid; a very few cases of small-  
pox among the crews might produce, a  
panic that would greatly prevent busi-  
ness, and as the sailors are in the habit  
of entering almost every premise in and  
about town, it became doubly necessary  
to annihilate all possible infected places.  
The clothes, also, of those discharged  
from the hospitals had to be burned, and  
the parties supplied with other and un-  
infected garments. The police force of  
Honolulu has assisted us nobly through-  
out, and fifty native and foreign con-  
stables have lost their lives in the bur-  
ial of their painful duty, in burying  
whom we have been led into additional  
expense.

Thus Your Majesty will understand  
that the principal items of expenditure  
may be classed under six heads, namely:  
(1) Hospitals; (2) medicines; (3) clothing;  
(4) food; (5) attendants, including quar-  
antine expenses; and (6) payment for  
houses destroyed. We have endeavored  
to observe the best economy in using the  
funds at our command, as our vouchers,  
we trust, will prove; but having expend-  
ed already almost \$18,000 we feel it nec-  
essary to know Your Majesty's pleasure  
in regard to our future operations. The  
question is, whether or no we shall dis-  
continue the supply of food and furnish  
medicines only on the Island of Oahu,  
in view of the contingent necessity of  
large sums being expended on the other  
Islands in case the disease should not be  
kept at bay there, but spread on the con-  
trary as it has done here. Should it suit  
Your Majesty's convenience to direct us  
at your first opportunity in regard to our  
future course, Your Majesty will oblige  
another favor to Your Majesty's most  
obedient servants,

L.H.O.L.I.H.O.

T. C. B. ROOKE.

W. C. PARKE.

Honolulu, September 12, 1853.

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